

Nov. 29, 2010

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TIP OF THE DAY	HEROES' CORNER	MAILBAG
		DID YOU KNOW?

TOP STORY

AVOID AN ETHICAL LAPSE THE LAW DEPARTMENT SHOWS YOU HOW

The Law Department wants employees to know that complying with the Federal Standards of Ethical Conduct — which apply yearlong — is especially important during the holidays, when employees often participate in seasonal activities while on the job.

“Employees who aren’t aware of the rules could find themselves in an uncomfortable and embarrassing ethical conflict,” says Jeannine Turenne, chief counsel for Ethics and Federal Requirements. “We want to make sure employees who take part in holiday activities know what’s permissible to avoid any problems.”

The Law Department has prepared an [online presentation](#) to help employees become familiar with the standards of ethical conduct. The presentation includes standards that apply to exchanging gifts between employees, receiving gifts from outside sources — including contractors — and attending holiday parties hosted by organizations outside USPS.

Employees with questions about the presentation or specific situations can call the Ethics Hotline at 202-268-6346 or send an e-mail to ethics.help@usps.gov.

“Complying with the Federal Standards of Ethical Conduct ... is especially important during the holidays.”

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CUSTOMER FOCUS

ANYTHING BUT FLAT FLAT RATE BOX ENJOYS A RECORD-SETTING OCTOBER

With the news that USPS was celebrating the sixth birthday of its successful Priority Mail Flat Rate Boxes ([Link](#), 11/18) comes word that last month’s revenue was 33 percent higher than the same period last year. October also was the highest revenue-generating month in the history of the product.

And that’s not all. Since the product was introduced in 2004, customers have used more than 362 million flat-rate boxes. And with the start of the holiday season, shipments of boxes over the past few months are up, compared to earlier months of the calendar year.



Vice President, Shipping Services, Gary Reblin.

LATEST VIDEOS

- [Saturation Mail Incentive — Lehigh Pizza \(11/24\)](#)
- [Dollars and change with Joe Corbett \(11/22\)](#)
- [Field Updates with DPMG/COO Pat Donahoe \(11/16\)](#)
- [Talkin' Retail \(11/12\)](#)
- [Field Updates with DPMG/COO Pat Donahoe \(11/9\)](#)
- [Going Green with Sam Pulcrano \(11/04\)](#)

Note: Some readers' access to video may be limited or denied.

QUOTABLE QUOTES

“I have long felt that the Postal Service

"Our Priority Mail Flat Rate Boxes continue to attract business and residential shippers," said Vice President, Shipping Services, Gary Reblin, adding that they're a key revenue generator for USPS going into the holiday mailing season. "I want to encourage all of our employees to talk up Flat Rate Boxes as the simple solution for holiday shipping with their customers, and with their friends and families."

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BUSINESS FOCUS

WHEN IT PAYS TO BE SUSPICIOUS

TIPS TO AVOID 'SOCIAL ENGINEERING' AT WORK OR HOME

"Social engineering" — e-mail messages containing bogus lottery notices, malware, stock scams and even online greeting cards — has one, damaging motive. The people who send these messages want to harm computers or improperly elicit personal information such as bank account information or Social Security numbers.

The techniques used to mislead users are pervasive and growing. "Phishing," for example, is the practice used to attract users to fake, but realistic-looking websites that fool many victims into revealing data that can be used for identity theft. A report issued earlier this month by computer security firm Symantec says the increase of phishing incidents on social media like Facebook increased 80 percent in one month.

Here are some tips to protect yourself from being victimized by a social engineering attack:

- Don't assume a computer's anti-virus software is a guarantee against intrusions.
- Turn off computers when they're not in use.
- Cover webcams that are not in use.
- Don't open attachments without verifying they're from someone you know.
- If you believe your computer has been compromised and you're receiving extortion threats, contact the police in your area.

"As a general rule, it's OK to be suspicious," says Manager, Corporate Information Security, Chuck McGann. "If you receive a message with an attachment from your mother at 3 a.m., ask yourself if she would have been up at that time. Be skeptical. If you're suspicious, don't open that attachment, don't respond to the message and learn to protect yourself."

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BY THE NUMBERS

RISE TIDE. Total Priority Mail Flat Rate Box volume for last holiday season (December 2009) was 104 percent higher than the same period in 2008.

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POSTSCRIPTS

A BEAUTIFUL MIND — FOR ZIP CODES. The latest edition of *Your Postal Podcast* — available online now at YourPostalPodcast.com — gets inside the head of a Boulder, CO, man who has memorized every ZIP Code in the country. While at the website, catch up on previous editions of the audio show. Podcasts also may be downloaded free at the iTunes store or by using any RSS feeder.

Send an e-mail to yourpostalpodcast@usps.gov with feedback, ideas or comments.

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DID YOU KNOW?

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is unfairly maligned. What can you get for 44 cents these days? You can get a fun-sized candy bar. Or 3 ounces of coffee. Or maybe one AAA battery, if it's on sale. Or, you can have someone come to your house, pick up a letter you've written, take it 3,000 miles across the country within a few days, and deliver it to your Aunt Millie's door. That's something you can get for 44 cents." — The American Prospect columnist Paul Waldman.

TIP OF THE DAY

MAKE IT PLAIN. When mailing, print addresses clearly and in all caps. Include all address elements — apartment or suite numbers and directional information for streets. For example, 123 S MAIN ST or 4567 ELM ST N.

HEROES' CORNER

When Mercer Island, WA, Letter Carrier Deborah Mulholland noticed mail accumulating at a customer's home, she called authorities to check on the woman's welfare. Emergency responders discovered the woman had fallen and needed help.

Representatives from the Mercer Island police and fire departments later arrived at the Post Office to report that Mulholland's concern and actions probably saved the woman's life.

Do you want to nominate an employee to be a hero? [Click here](#) for a copy of the nomination form.

MAILBAG

Patricia Courtney, Portland, OR: I remember my niece and nephew receiving their letters from Santa when they were younger ([Link](#), 11/24). What a treat it was to hear the awe in their voices and see the joy on their faces.

Have a question? A comment? Write to us at uspslink@usps.gov or just hit the "Reply" key. Be sure to include your topic in the subject line.



This holiday season,
Post Offices will
stock 45.6 million
envelopes, 29.5
million boxes and
55.5 million labels.

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2010 OPEN SEASON DEADLINES

Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP)	Begins Nov. 8 – Ends Dec. 13 (11:59 p.m. ET)
Annual Leave Exchange (ALE)	Begins Nov. 15 – Ends Dec. 15 (11:59 p.m. CT)
Federal Employee Health Benefits (FEHB)	Begins Nov. 8 – Ends Dec. 14 (5 p.m. CT)
Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA)	Begins Nov. 8 – Ends Dec. 26 (5 p.m. CT)

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**Local Emergencies.
Incidents.
Extreme weather.**
Is your facility operating
as usual?

Call the USPS National Emergency Hotline.
1-888-363-7462

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